A SERMON OF REPENTANCE.

A verie godly and profitable *Sermon, preached at Lee in Essex, by Arthur* Dent, Minister of Gods word: and published at the request of sundry godly and well disposed persons.

IONAH. 2. 8.

They that waite upon lying vanities forsake their owne mercie.



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In Concionem Arthuri Dent G. Pewdæi Carmen.

MAturè reſipiſce, precor, peccataq; linque,
Qui legis, aut audis, quiſquis es, iſtud opus.
Sin noua peccatis peccata prioribus addes,
Olim hæc te contra Concio teſtis erit:
Hac aliquod lecta flentes ſua crimina multum,
Mutârunt mores, & noua vita placet.

The ſame in Engliſh.

THou that doeſt reade or heare this work
I wiſh thee to do this:
Repent in time, and ſinne forſake,
amend that is amiſſe.
But if thou wilt adde ſinne to ſinne,
not minding to amend:
This Sermon ſhall a witneſſe be,
againſt thee in the end.
Some that haue heard this read of late,
Lamenting much their ſinne:
Haue chang'd their former manners, and
a new life now begin.

To the Reader.



Although I was most vnwilling that this poore talent and trauell of mine should euer haue beene broched abroad, & come to light; both because it may seeme as a candle lighted at noone day; as also because manie other mens doings might more worthily a great deale haue bene published, and committed vnto letters: yet because diuerse which heard it preached with a liuely voyce, were very instant, yea and more than importunate with me to haue it published, vsing such reasons, as I could not greatly gain-say, I did at the last yeeld to their request and so this vntimely fruit is come abroad, to be sold in open markets. Let no man

therfore be offended that I haue not strained my selfe to flie an high pitch, to fome out the froth of mans wisedome, and to make a great shew of learning, by blowing the bladder of vanitie till it burst with swelling. For that is not my vse, I seeke especially the saluation of the simple and ignorant, & therfore stoop down to their reach & capacitie. Therfore I beseech thee gentle reader, accept my good meaning Reade this without preiudice; like it as thou profitest, so shalt thou haue praise of God, and comfort in thy conscience.

A. D.

A SERMON OF REPENTANCE.

Luke 13. 5.

I tell you nay: but except you repent, you shall all likewise perish.

THe occasion of these words of our Lord & Sauiour Iesus Christ was, because there were certaine that shewed him of ỳ Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their owne sacrifices: that is, murdered them as they were sacrificing: & so their blood was mingled with the blood of ỳ beasts which were sacrificed. Those men therefore thought that those Galileans were greater sinners then all other Galileans, because they had suffred such things: and ỳ those eighteene also, vpon whom the tower in Siloam fell & slue them, were sinners aboue all men that dwelt in Ierusalem. Wherein they did hold a peruersion, naturally ingendered in all men

that is, very sharply, to see into the sinne
of others, and seuerely to censure them: bu
in the meane while to flatter themselues
and to bee blindfolded in seeing their own
sinnes. For these men thought, because th
like iudgementes did not fall vpon them
therefore they were safe enough, they wer
not so great sinners, but rather highly i
the fauour of God, according as many do
fally suppose, that those are alwayes th
worst sorte of people, whom God doth mo
strike, and presse with his punishing hand
hauing forgotten that God doth not kee
an ordinary rate here below, to punish e
uery man as he is worst, or to fauour an
cocker him as he is best, but onely taket
some examples as hee thinketh good, for th
instruction and aduertisement of all other
and to be as it were loking glasses, wher
in euery man may see his owne face, yo
and his owne cause handled, and that Go
is a seuere reuenger of sinne, that all me
may learne by the example of some to trem
ble and beware, least peraduenture they b
worthily constrayned to keepe their own
turnes, and to know what they haue de
serued. These men which brought the
newes to our Sauiour Christ had take
for

forth this lesson: whereupon our Saviour is iustly occasioned to correct their erroni-
ous and sinister iudgement, and to teach them that they must not reioyce at the iust punishments of others, but rather to be in-
structed thereby to repentance.

And further to signifie, that GOD doth not alwayes most punish the most notori-
ous offenders; as Murtherers, Theeues, Robbers, Whoremaisters, Blasphemers, Quarrellers, Scoffers, and such like; but reserueth them vnto the iudgement of the great day; and as it were fatteth them a-
gainst the day of slaughter, and therefore he answereth them negatiuely, and saith Nay, by not so, but except ye repent, you shall all likewise perish: as if he should say, Are you all of this opinion indeed, that only monsterous sinners are punished in this world, and others let alone: or that the Ga-
lileans and those eighteene vpon whom the Tower in Siloam fell, were greater sin-
ners then all others? Or do you thinke, be-
cause the same iudgementes haue not light vpon you, therefore you shall steale away in the darke, and escape the iudgement of God? No no, you are deceiued. For I say vnto you, that except you mourne and la-

ment

ment for your sinnes, and fall to some agre-
ment with God in time: (you say, euen
you which are so ready to condemne others
and iustifie your selues:) shall not onely pe-
rish with the like iudgements in this pre-
sent world, but be euerlastingly condem-
ned in the world to come. So that our Sa-
uiour in so saying, doth thunder downe a
most dreadfull sentence vpon all our heads:
for he concludeth and setteth it downe, that
all men liuing vpon the face of the earth,
whether they be high or low, rich or poore,
young or olde, noble or vnnoble, learned or
vnlearned, simple or politique, of what e-
state, degree, and condition soeuer they bee,
liuing and dying without repentance, shall
perish and be damned in hell fire for euer.
The Scriptures are full of such thunder-
bolts. Iohn 3. 18. He that beleeueth not, is
damned already. And 2 Corinth. 13. ver. 5.
Proone your selues whether you are in the
faith, examine your selues, know ye not
your selues, that Iesus Christ is in you, except
yee bee reprobates? Where the Apostle
flatly setteth downe that all those which
haue not Christ dwelling in their hearts
by faith, which is the houshold sister of
repentance, are no better then reprobates,

castawayes, and condemned persons. But because the most people in these dayes are grossly deceiued in Repentance both concerning what it is, what it meaneth, what it worketh, what bee the qualities and conditions of it, which bee the causes, and which bee the lettes and hindrances, and also why, when, and wherefore wee should repent. Therfore I haue in present intent to teach first what is repentance. Secondly, which bee his qualities and effectes. Thirdly, when wee should repent. Fourthly, wherfore we should repent. And last of al, what letteth vs from repentance: which order and method of teaching, although some may mislike (as indeede with mee it is not ordinary) yet considering the matter I haue in hand, I thinke it not inconuenient. But to the matter. Repentance is an inward sorrowing, and continuall mourning of the heart and conscience for sinne, ioyned with faith, and both inward and outward amendment. Inwarde, I say, in changing the thoughts and affections of the hearte: and outwarde, in changing the wordes, and workes, from euill to good. This repentance no doubt was in Dauid, who when hee was inwardly re-

proued by the Prophet Nathan, and his sinnes layd before his eyes did not stubbornly defend them, and so iustle against GOD: nor yet secretly excuse them and daube them ouer, but cryed out in the bitternesse of his hearte, I haue sinned, and thereupon made the 51. Psalme, a Psalme indeede full of dolour and heauinesse: wherin the Prophet bewayleth his fals, lamenteth his sinnes, and prayeth euen for a new heart and a new spirit, new thoughtes, new affections, new purposes of amendment of life. So that in Dauid we may see an inward sorrowing, a lasting griefe, (as the booke of Psalmes doth euery where declare, which layeth him out as it were in an Anatomie) yea and great reformation, both in inward and outward liuinges. Here therefore behold what is Repentance. Likewise Saint Peter, through infirmitie hauing denyed his Lorde and Master Christ, and being pinched of his owne conscience, and wakened with the alarme of a peare Cocks crowing, went out of the Court of Pilate with an heauie heart, weeping bitterly, and euer after stoutly professing Christ euen vnto the death. See then what is repentance. The Prophets

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in the olde Testament, exhorting the rebellious Iewes vnto repentance, vse commonly an Hebrew Verbe, which signifieth, turne ye, or returne ye and come backe againe: by the which Metaphor is meant, that like as a man that is strayed farre out of his way, must returne quite backe again the contrarie way: So those that haue strayed from the wayes of godlinesse to the way of sinne, must come backe againe as fast as euer they went forward, and altogether to change the course of their life: so that repentance is an earnest turning vnto God with all our hart, soule, and minde. Saint Iohn Baptist, and the Apostles in the new Testament exhorting vnto Repentance, vse a Greeke worde, which signifieth a changing of the minde afterwarde, or after witte, so that those which through their follie, and want of former witte, haue slipped into the deepe pitte and daungerous gulfe of sinne, when they come vnto themselues, and haue recouered their wits, will bee wise afterwarde, and take heede they neuer come there againe, according to the Prouerbe, the burnt child will take heede of the fire. By this time I hope you see what is repentance. It it not euery sorrow,

but

but ſorrow for ſinne: not for ſome ſinne, but for all ſinne: not for an houre, but for euer: not for a day, but continually: not for a weeke, but as long as we liue. Some think euery ſorrow is repentance, but ſo ſhould worldlinges repent. Some thinke euery little pant for ſinne is repentance, ſo ſhould Pharaoh repent. Some thinke all weeping and lamenting for ſinne is repentance: ſo ſhould Eſau, Iudas and Cain repent. Some thinke euery little humbling of our ſelues is repentance, but ſo ſhould Achab repent. Some thinke that good woordes and good purpoſes is repentance: but ſo ſhould euery ſicke man repent. Some thinke that reformation of woordes and deedes is repentance: but ſo ſhould euill men repent. Some thinke that cry God mercy, is repentance, and ſo ſhould euery fole repent: You ſee therefore how many are deceiued in repentance. But if you will ſee what it is in deed, looke backe to that which hath been ſaid afore. For he that will repent in good earneſt, muſt not hang downe his head like a Bulruſh for a day onely, and ſo haue done, nor cry from the teeth forward, Lord haue mercie on mee, and ſo away: but hee muſt make a backe reckoning with diligent conſide-

sideration of his former life, as did the Prophet Dauid, Psalme 119. verse 59. I haue considered my waies, and turned my feete vnto thy testimonies. So must euery one that meaneth to repent, slinke aside into some corner or out place, that there hee may haue rome enough to beate his owne conscience, and to make his heart smart for his sinnes, by aggrauation thereof, and weighing all the circumstances, as in the 9. of Daniell. The Church of GOD confesseth her sinne, not lightly, but with wonderfull great exaggeration and heaping of one thing to another. So that it is not enough to say, I haue sinned, but to say, I haue most traiterously sinned, I haue most obstinately, carelesly, and rebelliously sinned: I haue monstrously offended in such a place, in such a house, in such company, in such a day. In such a corner in the darke I committed adultery closely, when I thought none had seene mee: in such a chamber I bedded my neighbours wife: mine owne conscience doth accuse me of it: in such and such rompanie I haue beene drunke, I haue spoken and rayled against Gods word, I haue mocked the Preachers, I haue spared no other vnclenlie

adultery

speech, and rowe O Lord, Lord what an vgly monster, and wretched villaine am I: Here I stand before thy presence all naked, blinde, wounded, poore, wretched and miserable, hauing deserued a thousand damnations, if thou wouldest enter into iudgement, and try the law with me. Therfore I beseech thee shew pittie and compassion vpon mee. Annoint my woundes with the oyle of mercie restore mee my sight; cloath my nakednesse; enrich mee that am poore; strengthen mee that am weake; helpe mee that am fallen: oh bid mee not farewell. The infant ouercommeth his mother with crying; the childe his father with weeping; and the seruant his maister by intreatie; and wilt thou not be entreated O Lorde? Thus I say, if euery man would speake in his conscience to God, and thus narrowly or more narrowly examine himselfe, vndoubtedly he were in the way to repentance.

But alas it is a world to see how the blind Buzzardes, and crooked Canker-wormes of this world goe awrie from this rule, deceiuing themselues with the bare title and naked name of repentance. Many indeede can talke of it, but few walke in it: many

speake

[illegible] take it. Many describe it [illegible] by [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

his wickednes that hee hath committed, and doth that which is lawfull and right, he shall saue his soule aliue. And againe, Esay 55. 7. Let the wicked forsake his waies, and the vnrighteous his owne imaginations, and returne vnto the Lord, and he will haue mercy vpon him. So here wee see, to whome forginenes of sinnes, and the mercy of God belongeth: namely, to the penitent sinners, to those that leaue sinne, and imbrace godlines, to those that forsake their owne waies and imaginations, & turne vnto the Lord. And as for such as walke on in their owne wayes, and follow the delights of sin, without any sorrowe or purpose to leaue them, they hauing nothing to do with the mercie of God, and though Iesus Christ had suffred an hundred deaths (which could not be) yet shal no vnpenitent sinner haue remission of his sins by his death, nor any other benefits of his passion: for they belong onely to his Church and chosen people here vpon the earth. He therfore that is not of the church, he that is not graffed into Christ by faith, he that is not a member of his mysticall body, can enioy nothing by Christs death. If any man abide not in me, hee is cast foorth as a branch, and withereth, and men gather them

and

and cast them into the fire, and they burne. Iohn, 15.6. We reade in the 29 of Deuteronomie, how God barreth all stubborne sinners from his mercie, and doth most terribly shoote out against them. He that heareth the words of this curse, and blesseth himselfe in heart, saying: I shall haue peace although I walke according to the stubbornnesse of mine owne heart, thus adding drunkennesse to thirst, the Lord will not be merciful vnto him, but then the wrath of the Lord and his iealousie shal smoke against the man, and euery curse that is written in the book shall light vpõ him. So that God sayth plainly, he hath no mercie for such as walke in the vain delights of sin, & in the stubbornes of their owne hart: adding drunkennes to thirst: that is, ioyning one horrible sin to another, yet for all this it is a wonder to see how the blind wormes of the earth deceiue themselues. For they thinke whatsoeuer they say, whatsoeuer they do, be it good, be it euill, whether they repent or not repent, yet they shalbe saued by Christs death, as though they would make it a bawd to their sinnes, and so worke that villany against Christ. I hope to be saued by Christs death, as well as the best of them al, saith some. But where

is thy repentance, thou miserable wretch? Dost thou thinke that Gods mercie is common to all? And Christs death a bande for our sins? no, no, when it commeth to the vp-shot, thou shalt stop short. For it will proue farre otherwise: for thou shalt finde Gods mercie turned into iustice: & Christs death into wormewood, because thou hatedst knowledge, and chusedst not the feare of the Lord. Thus you see, my deare brethren, that repentance must needes goe before forgiuenesse of sinnes: and where it leadeth not the way, there the gates of Gods mercy are shut vp, and this is the first qualitie of Repentance. It hath also another condition, and that is, to alter and change men from that they were before, not in substance and proportion of the bodie, but in the qualities and conditions of the mind. For whosoeuer hath truely repented, you shall by and by see a most mercifull and wonderfull change in him, so that he will not doe as he hath done, nor speak as he hath spoken, nor company as he hath companied, nor play the good fellowe (as they terme it) as he was wont to do: nor run to the same excesse of riot as he was wont. And this is it that amazeth the world, & causeth the to bristle, &

some

some at the mouth like wild boares, and to speake euill of them that turned vnto God: for the world loueth his owne, and cannot abide that God should plucke one feather from his wings. But repentance doth violently pull men out of the clawes of Satan, and change them from the conditions of the world: for it maketh of proud, humble: of hurtfull, harmelesse: of cruell, meeke: of Wolues, Lambes: of Lyons, Sheepe: of adulterers, chaste liuers: of drunkards, sober men: of swearers, reuerent speakers: of haters, louers: of despisers, imbracers: of scoffers, followers: of earthly, heauenly: of Diuels, Saints. All this worketh Repentance. Paule trauelled towards Damascus a wolfe, a persecutor, a Bloud-sucker, an hater, a Despiser: but ere he came there, he was quite thanged, and cleane of another mind: so mighty was he that met him by the way. When Iesus Christ sent downe the holie Ghost vpon his Disciples, according to his promise, there were skorners at Ierusalem, which mocked and sayd, They are full of new wine. But the same men cryed out by and by after, Men and brethren, what shall we do to be saued?

Here was a most wonderfull, and sudden

change. Sée then the force of Repentance when God striketh it into the heart of man, & driueth the nayle to the head, as they say, it effecteth that which all the wisdome and policie of man is not able to bring to passe, and when they haue prolled hither and thither, and layd their heades together, and sought all the corners of their wits; yet can they not tel which way to turne their hand, or where to begin to change the heart of a man, and to conuert him to God. Therefore Repentance is stronger then all the whole world, & worketh that which all men with their naturall wits, fine heades, and déepe deuises cannot compasse: for the conuersion of a sinner is a worke supernaturall. Héere then we haue a glasse to behold our selues in, whether euer we haue repented, or no. For if we finde not this chaunge and alteration in vs, we haue not repented, and so consequently remaine vnder damnation. Therefore let euery man look vnto himselfe, for marke how much he is changed and altered from his former euill wayes, so much hath he repented. And hée that is the same man he was thrée, foure, eight, nay, thirtie yeares ago, surely, surely, he hath not repented, and therefore abideth in damnation. I

maruell

marvell then how those men, which never felt any change or alteration wrought in them, nay, whose consciences tell them, that they are not changed, ne know what it meaneth, can have any hope of salvation, unlesse peradventure they believe not his doctrine, or thinke it to be false: I will send over these men to such as have bene in the like case they now are, and yet thought they might do well enough for all that, although both blinde in judgement and corrupt in conversation. I have knowne and do know men, which before their conversion and inward change were counted as honest men as ever brake bread, & as substantiall men as they could be, as true dealers, upright liuers, and good housekepers as any of their neighbors: yea, and they had the same opinion of themselues too. And yet notwithstanding when they have felt Repentance working this change and alteration in them through the power of the spirit at the preaching of the word, and when they have had new harts, given them to discerne better, and new eyes to see better, as men come out of a dampe. have wondred and marvelled at the palpable and grosse darknes they were in before, and have burst forth into these words, that

they would not bee in the same case they were afore, no not for all the worlds goods, for if they should haue died in that case, they were sure they should haue been damned: But I pray you what case were they in before, were they not good honest men, and well accounted of, and honest liuers, & well take, wheresoeuer they came: surely they were so taken in the world, but now they thinke far otherwise of thēselues, their eyes being opened, & their iudgements enlightned, for now they see that they saw not before, now they vnderstand that God condemneth many whom the world iustifieth. We thinketh this example should make ciuill and worldly men see and suspect themselues, and know their owne misery before God. For these men were as good as they before the conuersion, and yet afterwarde, confessed that they were plunged to the bottome of hell, & drowned in the depth of damnation. He that hath eares to heare, let him heare, & he that hath eyes to see, let him see: for if men will still flatter themselues for all this, that they shall be saued without feeling any change or worke of repentance, it will cost them full deare in the end. For Christs words will proue true, that whosoeuer re-

penteth

penteth not, shall be damned: that is, whosoeuer doth not feele in himselfe, what is Repentance, and find in himselfe the qualities thereof shall be condemned. For where Repentance is, there bee the qualities of Repentance, and where the qualities bee absent, there is no true repentance. So that where Christ saith: Except ye repent, ye shall all perish: it is all one as if he had said, except ye know the truth of repentance, except ye can proue vnto your consciences the forgiuenes of your sinnes, except you feele a change & alteratiõ in the bottome of your heart, of all your former lewd waies & misdemeanor, you shall surely perish & be damned. But let vs yet a little further search out the qualities of repentãce: The Apostle in the seuenth chapter of the second Epistle to the Corinthians, setteth downe seuen notable qualities and effectes of Repentance. The first of them he nameth care. For beholde (saith he) this thing that you haue bin godly sorie, what care it hath wrought in you, that is an earnest studie, & as it were, a tasting thought to please God. For where true Repentance hath once wrought, there followeth great care afterward: care (I say) to liue in the obedience of GOD: Care to

keepe a good conscience. Care to reforme our households: care to instruct our wiues, children and seruants in the knowledge of God, care to pray with them morning and euening. And generally, care to performe all duties belonging to God: So that repentance is not a careleſſe, but a carefull thing. Let not men thinke therefore, that although they walter in careleſneſſe of the fleſh, and ſléepe in ſecuritie all the dayes of their life, yet their Repentance is good enough, yea, and though they ſpend whole dayes, nights moneths, and yéers in vanities, playes, and paſtimes, in idleneſſe, fond delights, pleaſure and voluptuouſneſſe, in negligence of all duetie, forgetfulneſſe of God, and contempt of all good things: yet for all this they repent for their ſins, and hope to be ſaued as well as any other. But alas how can theſe things ſtand together, to repent for ſinne, and to delight in ſin: to hate ſinne, & to loue ſinne: to flée from ſinne, and to follow after ſin: but theſe men I perceiue would faine make S. Paul a lier, for he ſaith, a man hath neuer repented, except he be carefull afterward to pleaſe God: they ſay they do repent and haue repented, although they liue neuer ſo wretchedly, and careleſly. But when all

licentious and lewde liuers, filthy whoremongers, beastly belly-gods, & careleſſe caitifes come to the kingdome of God, and are ſaued: then ſhall theſe men come alſo with them to be ſaued by careleſſe repentance.

The next qualities and effect of Repentance, is named clearing of our ſelues, that is, diſcharging of our ſelues, when ſin doth accuſe vs, and lay things to our charge: for when ſinne and Satan doth terrify the conſcience of the poore penitent ſinner, by and by he flyeth vnto God, and aſketh forgiuenelle through Jeſus Chriſt, and ſo cleareth himſelfe, and maketh his apologie againſt ſinne and Satan, like as a man that is preſented into the Court vppon ſuſpition of whoredome, or any other notorious crime, muſt cleare himſelf by witnes of that which is layd to his charge. So the conſcience that is cited by Satan before the iuſtice and iudgement ſeat of God, cleareth it ſelfe by Repentance, and aſketh forgiuenelle thorough Jeſus Chriſt. So that here we may ſée a wonderfull fruit of a penitent conſcience, it cannot abide the accuſation of ſinne. It cannot be quiet till it be reconciled vnto God: and ſo haue peace with it ſelfe. For this is to be noted in the godly man, that

when he hath committed any sinne, and his conscience telleth him of it, by and by he feeleth lead within him, and is all heauie, and cannot sleepe quietly, till he haue gotten into some corner where he may mourne and lament to the full, and confesse and lay open himselfe vnto God, & so cleare himselfe thorough Iesus Christ, his conscience bearing him witnes that his sin is forgiuen. Whereas contrariwise the vngodly man, when his conscience accuseth him of sin, he dispatcheth away al such thoughts, & treadeth them vnder foot, and by and by calleth for a paire of Cards or Tables, and some merry companion to driue away the time, and to put out all such thoughts out of his head: and so inward he increaseth them more and more, and causeth them to rankle inwardly.

The third quality is called indignation, that is, a mortall and deadly hatred against sin: as when a man doth shudder and shake, & as it were grinde his teeth at the remembrance of his sins. So this is alwayes in the penitent person to loath and abhorre all sin from his heart, both his owne sinnes and the sinnes of other, and to hate it as the diuell himselfe, which is the author of it, and so flie from it, as from the very cut-throate

and

and hangman of his soule, and to knowe it to be the only thing that blindeth, that hardeneth; that separateth from God, & procureth all plagues and diseases, both of body and soule against vs. Therefore he spitteth at it in disdaine, and disdaineth it, and stoppeth his nose at the stinke of it, whersoeuer he smelleth it.

The fourth thing is feare, which is a certaine awe of God, when a man is afrayd to displease him. For the penitent person feareth alway and being privy to his owne infirmitie and weaknesse (when God neuer so little withdraweth his grace, and leaueth him alone) worketh his saluation with feare and trembling. He will not presume vpon former grace to commit any sinne, or flatter himselfe in the mercie of God, and in the things that he hath already tasted of God, to yelde to some little sinne, thinking he may do that and be the child of God well enough, because some of Gods children haue fallen vnto greater: but rather he trembleth at the least motion of sinne, and is afraid of the temptations which Satan trumpeth in his way, and is afrayd when the temptations of sinne are vpon him, to satisfie the hunger of sinne, but rather he fighteth a-

againſt ſin, when ſin fighteth againſt him, and preſenteth the feare of God before his eyes (as godly Joſeph in the aſſault of Putiphars wife) to be as it were a tower of defence and welſpring of life, to auoyd the ſnares of death.

The fift thing is Deſire, that is, a hungering and thirſting after righteouſneſſe. For the penitent man is raviſhed with deſire of good things: he deſireth to be euery day better than other: he deſireth to leaue euery day ſome ſinne: he deſireth to pray: he deſireth new knowledge, and new vnderſtanding of heauenly things. He deſireth to heare Sermons, and will ſtraine himſelfe to heare them. He deſireth the companie of the godly, thinketh himſelfe in heauen when he is amongſt them. He deſireth the ſaluation of his very enemies, and prayeth for them. All theſe and many other ſuch like deſires are in the penitent man.

The firt qualitie is Zeale, which cõſiſteth in the earneſt imbracing of vertue, and hatred of vice, ſo that the penitent perſon is zealous of euery good thing. Zealous of Gods glorie in all places, in all companies, and amongſt all perſons. He cannot abide that Gods honor ſhould be impeached, or

his

his name blasphemed, or his glorie trampled vnder foote by wicked men, but he will open his mouth to reproue the wicked, and stand stoutly in the defence of Gods glory. He is not like the Atheists and dissemblers, which are alwayes as is the companie, that is, godly amongst the godly: a Protestant amongst Protestants, wicked amongst the wicked: a Papist amongst Papistes: a Worldling amongst Worldlings: and a Swearer amongst Swearers: a weathercocke that turneth with euery winde. The penitent man I say, is not of this stampe, but hee is constant and zealous in all good things: he is zealous both against the pleasures and profits of sinne, though he might win a whole world, or pleasure himselfe neuer so much, by committing a sinne against God, yet will he refuse it: for he hath learned from Christs mouth, that it shall not profite a man to win the whole world, and to lose his owne soule.

The last thing is Reuenge, that is, the penitent person is so offended with the sin he hath committed, that he wil be reuenged of himselfe for it. As for example, if he haue offended in gluttonie, he will reuenge himselfe by fasting two or three dayes after: If

hée haue offended in whoredome, he will be reuenged of his lusts, by haltering & bridling of them euer after: if he haue offended in couetous catching and poling of other mens goods, he will be reuenged on himself by restitution, as was godly and penitent Zacheus, and this indéed is a speciall fruit of Repentance, to reforme our selues in those things, wherein we haue most offended. Now, then you sée (my deare brethren) what lyeth in the belly of Repentance, and which bée her inwardes, so that we must néedes nowe come to the vnlacing and vnbowelling of Christs words: Except ye repent (sayeth hée) yee shall all perish: that is, except yee haue this forenamed care, you shall all be damned: except you haue this clearing of your selues, you shall be damned: Except you haue this indignation, you shall all be damned: Except you haue this feare, you shall be damned: Except you haue this desire, you shall all be damned: Except you haue this zeale, you shall all be damned: Except you haue this reuenge, you shall all be damned. For our Sauiour Christ doth not speake of the bare name of Repentance: but of repentance with all her furniture and appurtenances, so that whosoeuer hath not

not Repentance with all her qualities and effects, or at the least some measure of them, he hath no Repentance indeede, and therefore shall be damned: For except ye repent, ye shall all perish. But me thinketh that I heare some men say: Here is nothing but damnation, damnation: You preach nothing but the Law: let vs heare of the Gospell. My brethren I protest vnto you, that I speake of loue, whatsoeuer I speake. I desire the saluation of you all: If I could win but two in all this congregation, I would count my selfe happy, and thinke that God had greatly blessed my labours. And vndoubtedly, if I knew anie nearer way to bring you vnto God, than by preaching the Law, to make you knowe your selues, surely, surely I would vse it. Or if I could bee perswaded that the preaching of the Gospell, and mercie would doe you more good: you should heare of nothing but Gospell, Gospell, Mercie, Mercie: But alas, I see that euery carelesse and ignorant man presumeth vpon Gods mercie, I see that euery filthy liuer, and notorious blasphemer, abuseth Gods mercie in applying it to himselfe without Repentance, so that they would make Gods mercie a cloake for

their ſinnes: I ſée that euery man woulde faine be flattered in ſinne, and heare of it no more, but haue the Goſpell preached, which indéede belongeth not vnto them, continuing in their ſtubbornneſſe, but only to the penitent ſinner, which forſaketh himſelfe, and groneth and panteth vnder the burthen of his ſinne. Therefore when I ſée you humbled with the conſcience of your ſinnes, and grone and pant vnder the burthen of them: when I ſée your faces blubbered with weeping, and your harts mollified and ſorrowing with care, then will I comfort you, and ceaſe to preach the Law. But I pray you, will you ſteale, murther, and commit adulteries, and yet heare of mercie? Will ye mocke, ſweare, blaſpheme, and raile and yet heare of mercie? Will you ſerue ſinne, hate vertue, and follow your owne luſts, and yet heare of mercie? Would you haue plaiſters before you haue woundes? Would you haue Phyſicke before you be ſicke? Would you be let bloud before you haue need? Would you not account him a foliſh Phyſition that will miniſter phyſicke to a whole man? Would you not think him an vnſkilfull Chirurgion, that will apply a gentle ſalue to an olde feſtered ſore, and

not

not rather cozzie it? Then know you my brethren, that because you are full of grosse humozs, you must haue strong purgations, because you are full of old festered wounds, you must haue corasiue salues, for that is the best for you, and the speediest way to recouer your health: and forasmuch as you be rough Horses, you must haue a rough Rider: and hard knobbie Timber must haue hard Wedges, and hard strokes with a beetle. We preach the Lawe to driue you to Christ: we preach iudgement to make you seeke mercy, we preach damnation to bring you to saluation. But to preach mercie and forgiuenesse before men see their sinnes, or know their miseries by the preaching of the Lawe, is to preach the Gospell vnprofitably. For hee that is ignorant of the Lawe, knoweth not what miserie is in himselfe: nor what mercy is in God.

What father is there, who seeing his childe should play the stubborne boy, and disobey him in every thing he commaunded, would stroke his head, and say he were a good boy, and not rather seuerely correct him and whip him with a rod? What maister will commend his seruant for doing what he will, and not what he commaundeth him? euen so

we may not disobey, and doe euill, and loke to be flattered to, and not rather chidden. Let vs know then, that although God vse searing, launcing, cozzing, and searching of the bones, and other violent remedies, yet in the meane while he procureth our health by them. And let vs further vnderstande, that for as much as there is none other meanes to draw vs to saluation, but by clensing of all our vices, and the same cleansing cannot be done but by violence, when wee be warned by the doctrine of the Lawe, so as our owne conscience accuse vs, although we like well to bee now and then flattered and soothed, yet let vs seeke to be spoken vnto earnestly, to haue our faults told vs, and to be made ashamed of them, & to haue our vnhonestie discouered, and not desire to be pleased. For it was the next way to make vs rot in our owne filthinesse, if we should hold it in so secret: & it would cost vs too deere the setting on, if we should bee so flattered by men, and in the mean season the heauenly Iudge shal thunder downe vpon vs.

Therefore when any man commeth to a Sermon, let him first and formost make his reckening to be rebuked, as meete is, and let him vnderstand, that it is for his profite,

that

that he is not loathed. And if he haue itching eares, let him lay them away from him, assuring himselfe that els he is forclosed, so as he shal neuer receiue the doctrine to his profit and instruction. And let him be content to haue his sores rubbed and bewraied, that he may be brought to that, which is for his welfare. If a man please a sicke body, what shall become of him, shall he giue him drink euery minute of an houre? shall hee giue him wine, whereas he should giue him water? shall he giue him Sallets? It were the next way to poyson him. To be short, it is certaine that a man doth alwaies seeke his owne death, when he would haue men to flatter him. But now which is better, eyther that hee which hath the ordering of a sicke man, should yeeld to all his desires, or that he should bridle him, notwithstanding that he chafe and gnash his teeth, because he may not haue his owne will in his desires? You see therefore how dangerous a thing it is to flatter & raise vp men with the preaching of mercy, before they haue beene cast downe with the sense of gods iudgements. Cease therefore to open your mouthes to make hue and crie ouer the Countrey saying. They preach nothing but the law, the-

Lawe, Damnation, Damnation, vnlesse ye will take in Christ too, and make him one of the number, and accuse him of want of wisdome, because he preacheth and cryeth out that whosoeuer repenteth not, shall be condemned. For my part, I preach the Gospell to whom the Gospel belongeth, and the law to whom the law belongeth, I preach mercy, to whom mercy belongeth & iudgement, to whome iudgement appertaineth. And therefore hold your peace, and be content to be ruled by the wisdome of God. But now let vs procede to the third generall poynt, which is the time when we should repent.

The holy Ghost in the Scriptures poynteth vs to the present time, and exhorteth vs to make that the time of our repentance. Ioel. 2. 21. Therefore also now the Lorde saith, turne you vnto me with al your hart, with fasting, with weeping and with mourning. Likewise in the 3. Chapter to the Hebrewes: Exhort one another while it is called to day, least any of you bee hardened through the deceitfulnesse of sinne. And in the same Chapter: To day if ye will heare his voice, harden not your hearts as in the prouocation: So that now, euen now, euen now, is the time of our repentance.

Now

Now whilest he calleth, now whilest hee speaketh, now whilest he knocketh, let vs now therefore heare: let vs now therefore obey: let vs now therfore redéeme this day, this present Wednesday, which haue forestalled so many dayes, which haue so long hardened our harts, which haue let so many good things run out, and spill besides: let vs take vp this day, and make it the day of our repentance. Although we could neuer bée moued with any Sermon hitherto, yet let vs now be moued once at last: Let vs now say, This shall be my day of repentance, I will deferre it no longer: but nowe will I turne vnto my God, and forsake all my former wicked wayes, and mine owne imaginations: I will now change the course of my life, and begin all new againe. I will be acquainted with Gods word, and take counsell there how to do, and how to behaue my selfe in euery action. I will not only reforme my selfe, but also my whole houshold, wife, children, and seruants, according vnto the same. Thus my deare brethren, I beseech you, purpose in your hearts without any further delay, and be not like to Epicures and slacke-graces, which say, Youth will be youthfull, and youth will haue a

course, and what should we make it so holy when we are young: tush, there needes but a sigh an houre before death, let vs be merry now, we shall never be younger, we will repent when wee are olde. As though, poore soules, they had repentance in their sleeues, and at their commandement, and that they could repent when they list. No, no, these fellowes shall pay for their presumption. For God will giue them ouer to hardnesse of heart, and impenitencie, because they take so much vpon them, and made so long delayes, that in the meane season they might enioy the profits and pleasures of sin. Therfore good brethren, let vs not put it off from day to day, but let vs nowe seeke the Lord whilest he may be found, and call vpon him whilest he is neere: let vs take time while time is, for time and tide tarieth for no man. Let vs know this to be the time of our visitation. Our Sauiour Christ wept ouer Jerusalem, because they knewe not time of their visitation. He reproueth the Jewes because they could discerne the face of the skie, but could not discerne the signes of the times. And surely in the end it will turne to our destruction, if we wil not know this to be the day of mercie, the time of grace,

wherein

wherein God stretcheth forth his hand vnto vs, and wisdome crieth out in the streets. Therefore now whilest we haue the light, let vs walke as children of the light: the night commeth when no man can worke. It shall bee too late to call for mercy after this life, when the gates of mercy are shut vp, and Repentance will bee too late. My deere Christians, let vs remember the fiue foolish Virgins, which because they foreslowed the time, had heauē gates barred vp against them. Let vs also remember the fearefull & dolefull example of the rich glutton, which being in hell tormentes, yelled and yelped for the least ease and helpe that might be, & could not haue it. An hūdred thousād times therefore, better it is for vs to leaue our sins now, to mourne for them now, and now to repent, than hereafter, alas, when it will be too late. Better now a great deale to take some paines, to straine our selues to leaue our sinnes, and to make our harts smart for them, than to be condemned for euer, and to cry in the bottome of hell: We haue wearied our selues in the way of wickednes & destruction, and we haue gon through dangerous wayes: but wee haue not knowne the way of the Lord. What hath pride pro-

fited vs? Or what profit hath the pompe of riches brought vs? All those things are passed away like a shadow, and as a Post that passeth by. We haue set our selues against the children of God, we haue had them in derision, and in a parable of reproach, we fooles thought their life madnesse, and their end without honor, but loe they are counted amongst the children of God, and their portion is among the Saints. Therefore let vs know the time of our calling, and let vs not be worse then the fowles of the ayre: The Turtle, the Crane, & the Swallow obserue the times of their comming, the husbandman taketh his times, the Mariner watcheth his tides: therefore let vs also take the time, and turne vnto the Lord, whilest it is sayd to day, which grace God grant vs.

Nowe let vs returne vnto the fourth poynt, concerning the causes, which may moue vs vnto repentance. Herein I haue obserued nine especiall thinges. First, the great mercy of GOD leadeth vs vnto repentance: as Rom. 2. The bountifulnesse of God leadeth vs vnto repentance, sayth the Apostle. God doth continually follow vs with his mercies and benefits, both concerning our soules and bodies, we haue no

good thing, which we haue not receiued at his hands. We hold all that we haue of him, and to him are we beholding for all: great is his mercie towards our bodyes, but much greater towards our soules: and euery mercy and benefite, either toward soule or body, calleth vs to repentance. He giueth vs meate, drinke, and clothing, these call vs to repentance: he keepeth vs at his owne cost and charges here below, this calleth vs to repentance: the Sun, the Mone, and the Starres call vs to repentance. The Birdes of the ayre, the Fishes of the Sea, and the fruits of the earth cry out vpon vs, both loude and shrill: Repent, repent. All creatures moue vs to repentance. Our creation calleth, our redemption crieth, our sanctification knocketh, and our election moueth to repentance. What could God do more for his Vineyard, that he hath not done? Therefore let vs repent.

Secondly, the iudgements of GOD moue vs vnto repentance, for all the thunderboltes, Plagues, and Punishmentes, which God hath throwne downe vpon obstinate sinners, from the beginning of the world, are so many warning peeces vnto vs to awake vs out of the dead sleepe of sin, and

to pricke vs to Repentance. As in the first Cor 10. when the Apostle had cited diuers great iudgementes of GOD, against the old Israelites for diuers sinnes, he concludeth: Now all these things came vnto them for examples, & were written to admonish vs, vpon whom the endes of the world are come. So that all the iudgements we reade of in the Scriptures, are so many admonitions, and as it were Cart Ropes to draw vs to repentance. All the iudgements we read of, heard of, doe see, and heare of euery day, knocke with maine strokes, beate downe right vpon our consciences to Repentance. The vgly monsters; strange birthes, firie constellations, vnknowne Comets, sudden death, marueloos droughes, vnwonted snowes, horrible inundations, forrain wonders, strange apparitions, threatning of heauē aboue, with streaming and shooting fire, trembling of the earth vnder our feet, and our houses ouer our heads, as of late dayes: What are all these, but as it were great Cranes with beames, and Cable Ropes, to draw vs vp to the Lorde by repentance.

Thirdly, the word of God haleth vs to Repentance. For, as God in old time sent his

his prophets, both early and late, to call the rebellious Iewes to repentance: so he sendeth abroad his preachers, and messengers in these dayes, to sound vp the trumpet of his word, and to ring the swæt bel of Aaron amongst them, to awake them to repentance, but alas, how lightly are they regarded? Who heareth their voyce? But surely this is the last remedie that GOD hath appointed, and if this will not moue vs to repentance, if this will not cure vs, then are we altogether vncurable.

Fourthly, the infinite number of sinnes wee haue committed, ought to be so many spurres in our sides, to pricke vs to repentance. It is sufficient, saith Saint Peter, that we haue spent the time past of our life after the lustes of the Gentiles, walking in Wantonnes, Lusts, Drunkennes, Gluttonie, Drinkings, and al abhominable Idolatries. Therefore, it is time now to repent. Oh that men would take backe to themselues, as they were fortie, thirtie, twentie, or ten yeares agoe. Oh that they would call to minde, their open and secret sins, and me thinketh it should make their hart blede within their belly, to think vpon them. Oh that they would consider how

much time they haue misspent, & how many good things they haue neglected, and altogether omitted.

Fiftly, the shortnesse of our life, calleth earnestly vpon vs to repent. The time of our life is sixtie yeares and ten, and if they be of strength eighty yeres, yet the strength is but labour and sorrowe, so is it cutte off quickly, and we flee away, saith the Prophet Dauid, we haue spẽt our yeres as a thought. Therfore he addeth: Teach vs to number our dayes, that we may apply our harts vnto wisedome. Our life for the shortnes, and inconstancy of it in the scriptures is compared to grasse, to a vapour, to smoke, to a Weauers shuttle, which glideth away swiftly. Euen so the dayes of man passe away, no man knoweth how. Mã is of short continuance, saith Iob, and full of trouble. Experience teacheth, that to day a man, to morrow none. Hence away we must all, here is no abiding place for vs, how soone we know not. Therefore let vs repent.

Sixtly, the small number of those which shalbe saued, ought to thrust vs forward to repentance. Striue to enter in at the narrow gate: for many I say vnto you will seeke to enter in, and shall not be able, saith Christ,

Christ, Luk. 13.24. And in another place he saith, The gate is straight, and the way narrow that leadeth vnto life, and fewe there be that find it. If men would consider of this, it would make them loke better about them, and tric with themselues whether they bee of that small number or no.

Seuenthly, death threatneth vs, who is very terrible to the flesh, and the remembrance of it very bitter to a man that is souled and soked in the pleasures of this world. It flattereth no man, it regardeth no persons, it weigheth not friendship, it careth not for rewards, it is very grim, vgly, and cruell, and killeth down-right where it hitteth. Therefore let vs repent.

Eightly, the day of iudgement and second appearing of the Sonne of man, will come as a theefe in the night, in the which the heauens shall passe away with a noyse, and the Elementes shall melt with heate, and the earth with the workes that are therein, shall bee burnt vp: seeing therefore that all these thinges must bee dissolued, what manner of persons ought yee to bee in holy conuersation and godlinesse, saith Saint Peter 2. 3. The Lorde Iesus shall shewe himselfe from Heauen,

with his mightie Angels in flaming fire, rendring vengeance vnto them that knowe not God, and obey not vnto the Gospell of our Lord Iesus Christ, saith the Apostle, 2. Thessal. 1. I sawe (saith Saint John Apoc. 20.) a great white Throne, and one that sate on it, from whose face fled away both the earth and the heauen, and their place was no more found. And I saw the dead both great & small stand before God: and the bookes were opened, and another book was opened, which is the booke of life, and the dead were iudged of those things, which were written in the bookes according to their works. And the sea gaue vp her dead which were in her, and death and hell delivered vp the dead which were in them: and they were iudged euerie man according to his works. In these places we see both the sodainnesse, the fearfulnesse, and glorie of Christs comming. For he shall not come poorely, and contemptuously, as in the first visitation, but he shall come very princely, royally, and triumphantly to the great terrour of all his enemies, when a consuming fire shall go before him, & ten thousand thousands of Angels waite vpon him: at what time the kings of the earth, and the great men, and [illegible] men, and the chiefe

captaines

captaines and the mighty men, and euery bondman, & euery free man shal hide themselues in dennes, and amongst the rockes of the mountaines, and say to the rockes and mountains, fall on vs, and hide vs from the presence of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lambe, for the great day of his wrath is come, and who can stand? Apoc. 6. Therefore let vs repent.

The last thing is hell torments, then the which nothing is more intollerable. Therefore saith Christ, Mar. 9. If thine hand cause thee to offend, cut it off. It is better for thee to enter into life, maimed, than hauing two hands to go into hell, into the fire that neuer shall be quenched, where the worme dieth not, and the fire neuer goeth out. The Scripture speaketh terrible to our senses, concerning the estate of the damned persons, calling it hell-fire, damnation, the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone for euer. In the thirtie chapter of the Prophecie of Esay it is called Topheth, and it is euen prepared of olde, it is euen prepared for the king: hee hath made it deepe and large, the burning thereof is fire and much wood, the breath of [illegible] like a riuer of brimstone doth kin[illegible]se speeches are

terrible to our sences, and may marueilously amaze vs. But if I had the tongues of an hundred men, nay of an hundred Angels, yet were I not able to vtter them, as some shall one day feele them, much lesse were you able to conceiue them. If all the tortures and cruell torments that can be deuised by the wit of man, were executed vpon some one, yet were it nothing to this. We poore wretches thinke there is no paine to a collick, or a cruell ague. But if all collicks, agues, & al other strange diseases could possiblie light in one man, it were but a flea-biting to that which is to come. The paine is endles, easeles, and remedilesse. The dayes of their hellish torments shall neuer weare out, nor their yeeres come to an end, the longer they continue, the lesse hope haue they. When as many yeeres are expired as there be men in the world, and starres in the heauens: when as many thousand yeeres are ended; as there be stones and sand by the sea shore: yet still there bee tenne hundred thousand times so many mo to come. Those that will not now be moued in hearing, shall then bee crushed to peeces in feeling. All drunkards, swearers, whoremongers, vsurers, extortioners, lyers, mockers, contemners,

ſecure perſons, iolly fellowes, roiſting ruffians, luſty blouds, the braue lads of this world, and all other vnbeleeuers, ſhall one day be apprehended, and arraigned before the barre of Gods tribunall ſeate, where the Maieſtie of God ſhall ſtand aboue them with a naked ſword of vengeance, and a ſcepter of Iuſtice. The diuell that old Sathanas ſhall ſtand on the one ſide to accuſe them, and their owne conſciences on the other ſide to condemne them, and the gaſping gulfe of Hell vnderneath them readie to ſwallow them vp for euermore. Then ſhal the dreadfull ſentence of eternall woe and damnation proceede againſt them: Goe ye curſed into hell fire, &c. There they ſhall drinke as a iuſt recompence of their iniquitie, the bitter cup of Gods eternall wrath and indignation in the kingdome of darkeneſſe, and in the fearfull preſence of Satan, and all the curſed enemies of Gods grace, where the dolefull drumme of Gods anger ſhall euer ſound through their eares, where ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of teeth, where ſhall be confuſion, woe, and endleſſe lamentation. Their gripes ſhall be great, their grones ſo deepe, and their garboiles ſo vntollerable, that they ſhall grin like a dog

in their infernall conuulsions, & with howling and yelling cry out, woe, and alas that euer I was borne: Oh that I had neuer bin borne, or that my mother had born me a toade, for then my condition should haue bin better then it is. Curſed was the time I was begot in, the houre I was conceiued in, and the day that I ſucked my mothers paps. Curſed I was alwayes, curſed I am, and curſed I ſhal be for euermore. Wo, wo, how great is my torment; whoſe heart doth not melt, whoſe eares doe not glow, whoſe haires do not ſtand vp on his head to heare theſe things? Therefore deere brethren let vs repent. If the mercy of God cannot allure vs, let his iudgements ſcarre vs. If his iudgements cannot ſcarre vs, let his word moue vs. If his word cannot ſcarre vs, let our ſinnes amaze vs. If our ſinnes cannot amaze vs, let the ſhortnes of our life dampe vs. If the ſhortnes of our life cannot dampe vs, let the ſmall number of thoſe that ſhalbe ſaued, affray vs. If that cannot fray vs, let death terrifie vs. If death cannot terrifie vs, let the day of iudgement ſhake vs. If that cannot ſhake vs, yet let hell torments ſhudder vs, and rent vs in peeces. For verily my brethren, if none of all theſe can preuaile

uaile, if he will not for all this repent, but be obstinate, then we shall all perish & be damned, according to Christs words. Now let vs procéede to speake of those things which let and hinder vs from Repentance, which indéed although they be in number infinite, yet at this time I will lay forth seuen speciall lets, and hindrances vnto repentance.

The first is vnbeléefe, that is, when men will not beléeue those things which are spoken and prowed vnto them out of the word of God. This is it that vomiteth vp all good things, and poysoneth the very intrals of a man, and kéepeth all good graces from vs, as appeareth Mathew 13.58. Hee did not many great workes there, for their vnbeleefe sake. And in the the fourth to the Hebrewes it is sayd. Vnto vs was the Gospell preached, as also vnto them, but the word that they heard, profited not them, because it was not mixed with faith, in those that heard it. So that héere wée may sée, although wée heare neuer so much, yet if wée bring not faith with vs, wée shall neuer profit vnto repentance. For vnbeléef taketh vp our harts for Satan, and refuseth all the wholesome doctrins of saluation, and doth so harden them in the lusts of sinne, that

in the end they become past feeling, and can not bee touched one whit, either with the iudgements or mercies of God: but count the one as blasts of wind, and make the other a couert for their filthinesse. You shall note some men, who when they haue heard their sins straitly ripped vp by the word of God, and their iust damnation proued by the same, without speedy and earnest repentance, will breake out into these words of vnbeliefe: If it be as he saith, God help vs, I hope it is not so, I trust I shall doe well enough for all this, as long as I haue a good faith in GOD, and doe no body vs harme. Shall I leaue my pleasures and my profits for their sayings? What? doe they thinke none shall be saued, but such as reade the Scriptures, and heare sermons: God forbid but these which doe not goe to heare sermons, should be saued as well as they: why may not one serue GOD as well at home in his house hauing good bookes and good prayers, as by comming to the church to heare Sermons and Seruice? Alas, these men stand too much in their owne light, and bewray what follie, and ignorance is in them. For do they thinke to be saued by any other meanes than God hath appoynted or

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when God hath auouched any thing in his word, will they except against it, & so make God a lyer: when God hath once set downe a thing, & proued it to their faces, will they yet reply: when GOD hath tolde vs that the preaching of the word is the ordinarie meanes of our saluation, shall wee hope to be saued, although we contemne it, & neuer or very seldom heare it? Is not this plaine infidelitie and vnbeleefe, that when God sayth one thing, we will say another: when God saith, yea, wee will say, no, I hope not so. Yes surely that is it that stoppeth the way vnto Gods graces, and barreth vs out from repentance.

The second let, is this presumption of Gods mercie, for if mẽ be sharply reproued for their sinnes, and exhorted vnto repentance, by and by they take couert, saying: GOD is mercifull, GOD is mercifull: as though God were made all of mercy, and that there were no iustice in him at all: and thus the wicked make Gods mercie an occasion to sin, which thing the Prophet Nahum in the first of his prophesie doth sharply reproue: The Lord (saith he) is slow to anger, but hee is greate in power, and will not surely cleere the wicked. But because

I haue ſpoken afore of this preſuming and miſapplying of Gods mercy, I will here paſſe it ouer, willing you to note it as one ſpeciall let vnto repentance.

The third hinderance is the example of the multitude, for that doth harden and imbolden men vnto ſin. As when many birds flicker and flocke together, they fall vpon the net without any feare: but one or two alone will be afrayd. Euen ſo the examples of many, and many ſinne-companions doe imbolden men to run through the ſnares of Satan without any miſtruſt. Therefore it is ſayd in Exodus 23. Thou ſhalt not follow a multitude to doe euill. This is the thing that hindreth a great number from God: for they neuer looke vp vnto GOD, or to his word, but ſtare vpon the common doings of moſt men, and examples of the world, thinking if they do as the moſt men doe, as their forefathers haue done before them, they are cocke ſure, and of an euen ground. And hereupon ariſeth, their diuelliſh prouerbe; Do as moſt men doe, and the feweſt will ſpeake of you: but they haue forgotten Saint Paules rule. Romans 12. Faſhion not your ſelues like vnto this world. Theſe fellowes that ſtand vpon multitude,

will

will reason thus: we see none of the great ones of the world, none of the noble, none of the rich, none of the wise and prudent, receiue this doctrine, but only a seiue shackrags and beggerly rascals, and therefore it is a token that it is nothing worth, and that it is doubtfull, and not for vs to meddle withall. Loe what thoughts may crepe into our heades, and how slily Satan may trumpe in our way, and blindfolde vs, and leade vs away in the darke, by doting vs with the example of the multitude. Therefore let vs take heede of those Pitfalles, which Satan layeth in our way, and not be carried away with these thoughtes and reasons. The wicked beare themselues in hand that they shall winne the game, and that the goale goeth on their side, and there is nothing but crowing long before it be day, and great triumphing amongst them before any stroke be striken, and that because we be but a handfull of people, & they a great multitude, and that in a manner the whole world agreeth with them to practise our death. Thus the Diuell doth cast a mist before their eyes and closely leade them away from Repentance. Therefore deare brethren, let vs stand fast in the word of

the Lord, and not be caried away or bowed quite downe with the raging streame of the multitude: but let vs know it to be one speciall engine of Sathan, whereby he driueth vs from repentance.

The fourth let vnto repentance, is long custome of sinne. For that taketh away all sence and feeling of sinne, and maketh it as if were another nature vnto vs: so that we may as wel alter nature, as shake it off whē it is once thus soldred vnto vs through lōg custome. Therefore it is said: Ierem. 13. 23 Can the blacke Moore change his skinne? or the Leopard her spots? Then may yee also do good, that are accustomed to doe euill. Heere the Prophet affirmeth, that it is as hard to cure an olde disease that is bred in the bones, and to remedie a sinne that hath been hatched and brought vp with vs, as to wash a blacke Moore white, or to change the spots of a Leopard, which cannot bee without destroying of nature. And surelie try it who will, he shal find it as hard a matter to leaue an old custome, whether it be of swearing, of damning, of lying, of whoring, of euill company, or of any other sinne, as to wash an Ethiopian. Therefore it is written, Prouer. 17. Though thou shouldest bray a

foole

foole in a morter, among wheat brayed with a pestill: yet will not his foolishnes depart from him. So that as long as we are in custome with sinne, the doore of repentance is barred vp against vs.

The fift hinderance, is long escaping of punishment, for the wicked thereby are starkened in sin, and driuen off from repentance, euen as an old theefe that hath stolne a long time, and escapeth both pryson and gallowes, is animated more boldly to proceede in his wickednesse, thinking he shall so alwaies escape: So many filthy and lose liuers goe forward in their abhominations without Repentance, thinking that because God doth not incontinently punish them, and shew some manifest iudgement and signe of his wrath vpon them, therfore they shalbe acquited for altogether. Where as contrariwise, if God should by and by strike them downe as soone as they had sinned, by thundring vpon one, and lightening vpon another, and raining fire and brimstone vpon the third, it would make them afraid. Hereupon it is sayd in Peter 2. 3. 4 This first vnderstand, that there shall come in the last daies mockers which wil walke after their lusts, and say, where is the pro-

mise of his comming? For since the fathers dyed, all things continue alike from the beginning of the creation. But let these men well know, that when God hath delayed a long time, and prolonged the terme of the wicked, at length hee will shew, that although he wayted for their repentance, yet he forgat not their misdeedes, but registred them before him, and packed them vp vpon a great heape, to increase the terrour of his wrath.

The first hinderance, is the beholding of other mens endes. For when some men that haue liued a wicked, and an vngracious life, and haue been notorious sinners euen to the world-warde, so that euery man could poynt at them: yet if vpon their death bedde they can say a few good wordes and crye God mercy, and say their prayers, and forgiue all the world, and so die quietly, it is marueilous to heare, how foolish people of the world will erait them, and iustifie them, saying: Ye made a very good end as any mã could make, he died as quiet as a lamb, and set all things in good order before hee dyed. Hereupon another [illegible] and monstrous varlet is [illegible]. For thinketh he, surely a man liued [illegible] as I, or any man

man else, and yet he made a very good ende. & why may not I doe so too? But alas these mens eyes are bleered: For to die quietly, is not to die godly: to cry God mercie for fashion, is not to haue God mercifull: to say a few prayers from teeth outward, is not to die in the faith of Christ: for many doe all this and yet die miserably.

The last let, is hope of long life, for while men feed, and besot themselues in this hope they are drunken in sin, and deferre the day of repentance. As the rich man in the 12. of Luke, dreaming of his long life, cast off al thought of God, and of the other life, and of Christs comming, and of repentãce, and all good things, and sayd within himself: Soul thou hast much goods layd vp for many yeares, liue at ease, eate, drink, and take thy pastime. Thus the bleare-eyed men of the world choake vp Repentance, & quite smother it, by doting themselues with hope of long life. Therefore my deare brethren, I beseech you by the mercies of GOD in the bowels of Iesus Christ, that none of all these common lets may stay you from speedie and vnfayned Repentance: But that you may ouerslide them all, least vnhappilie you being found without Repentance,

and taken tardie in your sins, should all perish and be damned, according to Christs sentence. Wherefore in conclusion, let vs with godly Ezechiah, be affrayde of Gods threatnings, sorrow afore hand, stand in awe of God, examine our conscience, mourn for our sins, & lament inwardly, that when the wicked which haue swimmed in pleasures here below, shall enter into their eternall paines: we may then, I say, there haue euerlasting peace and rest, that when Iesus Christ shall appeare from heauen with all his holy Angels, we may haue Crownes of glorie, and raigne with our God, and our Sauiour his Sonne, and al his Saints and Angels, in the middest of all ioy, in the heauens for euermore. To the which ioy he bring vs all which hath so dearely bought vs, Iesus Christ the righteous: to whom with the Father and the holy Ghost, be all honor, glory, praise, power, empire, and dominion now and for euermore,

Amen.

FINIS.

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Dent, A.

HH 134 collated & perfect.

A1 & D8 probably blanks cut away. small worm hole in last 3 leaves, and corner of title mended)

H.H. Bernard Quaritch Ltd

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